

PSALM 45:6-7 AND ITS CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEBREWS

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In his past administration of human history, God not only endorsed, he canonized the importance of the Davidic monarchy for the nation of Israel.¹ The Davidic king-priest was divinely called and authorized to rule Yahweh's people, to build and maintain Yahweh's temple, and to keep and enforce Yahweh's law, which had been given through Moses (2 Sam 7:8-16; Pss 2; 72; 132:11-12). The temple was an important symbol to David and Solomon. It served to exemplify Yahweh's presence, to exercise ceremonial law, and to endorse the Davidic king-priest's right to rule. Although David initially desired to build the temple for Yahweh ("for me to dwell in," 2 Sam 7:5), God modifies David's request and promises that a temple will be built "for my name" (2 Sam 7:14).² In addition, Solomon, not David, was to build God's temple (1 Kgs 6:1-37; 8:1-66; 2 Chr 2:1-7:10). As a result, the temple remained an important symbol for subsequent Davidic kings, but Israel's Davidic monarchy failed to honor Yahweh and his temple. Thus Yahweh set into motion a twofold plan of retribution and restoration.

With the eventual demise of the Davidic monarchy, the temple's destruction, and Judah's deportation to Babylon in 586, God's people entered a period of exile. Those who emigrated back to Jerusalem from Babylonia during the Persian period constructed a new temple, "developed the canon of Torah," and fashioned an internationalistic and pluralistic religion.³ Judaism thus emerged as a Diaspora

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¹Human kingship over God's people was sanctioned long before David was anointed king over Israel and God made his promise to David concerning Solomon (2 Samuel 7). See Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 189-90, 208-9; Darrell L. Bock, "Covenants in Progressive Dispensationalism," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism* (ed. H. W. Bateman; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 172-77.

²Lyle Eslinger notes that the formula "for my name" is in keeping with what God set down long ago (Deut 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23, 24; 16:2, 11; 26:2). For the political implications of temple building in the ANE and for David/Solomon see Lyle Eslinger, *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 1-64; Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 262-67, 273-84, 293-96.

³Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995); John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); Albert I.

religion, which tended to be separated from the local Jerusalem government, yet temple-centered.

Albeit a temple-state, Judea employed symbols of sovereignty—most notably the temple—which were restricted due to its status as a secondary state in a province of the Persian and subsequent Grecian and Roman Empires. Thus many Jews of the first century believed Israel's exile was still in progress because Israel's restoration and the restoration of the Davidic line had not yet been fulfilled.⁴ Thus first century Judaism expected Yahweh to end their exile, re-establish the kingdom of Israel, and restore the Davidic monarchy. Granting that no single view of an anticipated messiah acquired sole dominance within first-century Judaism, "the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties," according to Wright, "supplied the actual models of kingship that most people knew; speculations about a coming king were speculations about someone who would replace these suspect dynasties with the true, god-given one."⁵

Wright's basic worldview of second-temple Judaism, with which I agree, may be summarized simply as monotheism (there is one creator God), election (God has chosen Israel to be his people), and eschatology (God will act for his people and work through his people to re-establish Israel in her land).⁶ It was into this cultural-theological environment that God sent his man, revealed his prophet, and spoke through his messiah, Jesus. Despite Judaism's expectations, Jesus' kingdom message of restoration was not believed. Thus Jesus was crucified but resurrected in three days. It was some thirty plus years later, mid-60s A.D., that the author of Hebrews writes to a Jewish-Christian audience in Rome.

Realizing that he was living in "the last days" (Heb 1:2a), the author of Hebrews selects and intentionally intermingles OT passages, some of which were primed culturally and employed frequently to address, however indirectly, the restoration of the Davidic dynasty or a realized kingdom. This is not to minimize the explicit thrust of the author, namely, the Son's superiority over the angels (1:4). It is, however, to call attention to the fact that the author speaks of the Son's superiority by underscoring the current and permanent rule of a superior Son (1:5-13). At the center of this disclosure is Psalm 45, a song initially written to celebrate the

Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation* (New York: Brill, 1997), 46, 68-70.

⁴For Israel's expected restoration see Sir 36:1-15; Tob 13:16-18, 14:5-7; Bar 2:7-10, 3:6-8; 2 Macc 1:10-2:18; 4Q504-506. For the expected restoration of the Davidic line see Sir 47:11, 22; *Pss. Sol.* 17:4-21; 1QS 9:11; 1QSa; 1QSB; 4Q174; 4Q175; 4Q161 [4QpIsa" 7-10]; 4Q251; 4Q252; 4Q259; 4Q285 [frgs. 5.3-4, 6.2]; 4Q286; 11Q14; 11Q13; Acts 2. Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel," in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 77-100.

⁵N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1996), 482.

⁶N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 268-79, 299-301; id., *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 126-31, 202-9. For a similar perspective, see Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 15-69.

marriage of a mighty and glorious ruling Davidic monarch (45:1-9), to provide instructions to a foreign princess (45:10-15), and to express dynastic blessings (45:16-17).⁷ The purpose of this essay is to identify the importance of vv. 6 and 7 of Psalm 45 to the book of Hebrews in light of its significant Christological contributions in Heb 1:5-13. More specifically, we will examine the statement "your throne . . . is forever" (כִּסְאֶךָ . . . עוֹלָם וָעֶד), the designation of the Davidic monarch as "O God" (אֱלֹהִים), the emphasis given to the "scepter of justice . . . of your kingdom" (שֵׁבֶט מִיֶּשֶׁר), and the phrase "above your companions" (מִתְכַּבֵּד) by highlighting the compositional and interpretive contexts of first the psalmist, and then the author of Hebrews.⁸ Thus we will compare the psalmist's cultural-theological worldview of the Davidic king-priest of a foregone era with that of the author of Hebrews in order to highlight the importance of Ps 45:6-7 to the book of Hebrews.

I. "YOUR THRONE . . . IS FOREVER"

A. "Your throne . . . is forever" in Ps 45:6

In its original compositional and interpretational context, "your throne" (כִּסְאֶךָ) is an important part of the royal insignia in antiquity, which served to symbolize the king's ruling authority. In fact, the king's throne (2 Sam 3:10; 7:13; 1 Kgs 1:37, 47; 9:5; 1 Chr 17:12; 22:10; 2 Chr 7:18; Jer 43:10; Hag 22:22; Ps 89:5, 30, 45) or the king in relation to his throne (1 Kgs 1:48; 2:4, 24; 3:6; 5:19; 9:5; 10:9; 2 Chr 6:16; 9:8; Ps 132:11) is an important element in the relation between God and the

⁷Although Ahab (ca. 875-853 B.C.), Joram (ca. 849-842 B.C.), and Solomon (ca. 965-926 B.C.) are just a few possible monarchs to be considered, Solomon seems to be the most likely referent. First, he had friendly relations with Tyre (cp. 45:12 with 1 Kgs 5:1-12; 9:10-14; 10:11-12). Second, ivory adorned Solomon's palaces (cp. 45:8 with 1 Kgs 10:18; 2 Chr 9:17). Third, the Queen of Sheba recognized him as a king who was just and righteous (cp. 45:7 with 1 Kgs 10:1-10). Fourth, Solomon married foreign women (cp. 45:10 with 1 Kgs 11:1-3; 3:1). Finally, allusions to Nathan's oracle (2 Sam 7:8-16) exist. The Davidic messiah is one who is blessed forever (45:2), one guaranteed a throne as long as he lives (45:6), one anointed by God (45:7), one promised heirs (45:16), and one who will be rid of his enemies (45:5), which suggest that the psalm is written for a Davidic king. So perhaps Psalm 45 is a love song composed for one of King Solomon's many weddings.

⁸By compositional context, I mean all pertinent features of the original historical, natural (geographical/biological), and cultural (social/economic/political/religious) milieu that underlie the various events being reported (or alluded to) in the text. Although less clear for Hebrews, it also includes the actual circumstances and setting within which the author produced the work under consideration. By interpretational context, I mean taking into consideration both the original and the current setting of interpretation. Thus this essay focuses on the OT compositional and interpretational context first and then identifies its expanded understanding due to the *new* compositional and interpretational context in the NT. Adapted from Ernst R. Wendland, "A Tale of Two Debtors: On the Interaction of Text, Context, and Context in a New Testament Dramatic Narrative (Luke 7:36-50)," in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis* (ed. D. A. Black; Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 101-43.

king.⁹ Thus "your throne" (מִסְבֵּתְךָ), functioning as a metonymy of subject, identifies the Davidic monarch's current ruling authority as sanctioned by Yahweh (2 Sam 7:16; 1 Chr 17:12; 22:10; 2 Chr 7:18; 1 Kgs 9:5).

The duration of the king's ruling authority is evident through the phrase "forever and ever" (עַלְמֵי וָעַד). "Forever and ever," here, is similar to the expression "may the king live always" (of David at the end of his life, 1 Kgs 1:31; of Artaxerxes, Neh 2:3) or "I will sing forever" (as long as I live, Pss 52:9; 115:18; 145:1, 2). Gunkel rightly argues that the promise of *immortality* (Pss 21:5; 45:3, 7; 61:7f; 72:5; 110:3f) should not be taken too literally since the poet is satisfied that the king's name (Pss 45:18; 72:17) or the king's house lasts forever (Pss 89:29f, 37f; 132:12; 2 Sam 7:16; 1 Kgs 2:4, 45; 9:2f).¹⁰ Thus the term "forever and ever" speaks of a ruling authority that will last throughout the monarch's life but is perpetuated by the promise of children through his anticipated marriage (Ps 45:17; cf. 2 Sam 7:11b-12, 14a, 16; 1 Chr 17:11-14). More specifically, "forever and ever" is applied implicitly to the dynastic line (vv. 16-17). In summary, "your throne" identifies the OT Davidic monarch's current rule, and "forever" speaks explicitly of the duration of the monarch's rule during his lifetime and implicitly of the perpetuation of the dynastic line through his children.

B. "Your Throne" in Heb 1:8

In keeping with the OT figurative usage, "your throne" (ὁ θρόνος σου) speaks of the Son's current rule. The author addresses the Son's rule when he announces his entrance into a unique relationship with the divine Father as Davidic Son (Messiah)¹¹ in Heb 1:5 via Ps 2:7¹²

⁹J. S. Mulder, "Studies on Psalm 45" (Ph.D. diss., De Katholieke Universiteit te Nijmegen, 1972), 33-34. See also E. Douglas Van Buren's "The Sceptre, Its Origin and Significance," *RA* 50 (1956): 101-3.

¹⁰Hermann Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. J. D. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 112-13.

¹¹In an attempt to reflect the cultural-theological worldview of the OT, second temple period, and the NT, I use "son" and "messiah" as conceptually interchangeable terms when they speak of the Davidic monarchy. Although I believe Jesus to be the Messiah, I do not emphasize the difference between the Davidic messiah of the OT, the envisioned messiah in extra-biblical material, and Jesus the messiah with lower and upper case "m" or "M." I do this for three reasons. First, the use of Messiah is sometimes *assumed* to speak of Jesus the divine Messiah. Second, the Jewish people expected a human messiah (see nn. 4 and 27), sent by Yahweh, to intervene on behalf of his chosen people in a political-social manner (see Wright, *People of God*, xiv, 307-20). Finally, it seems that the disciples themselves did not understand Jesus to be a divine messiah until after his resurrection. Thus when I want the term "messiah" to speak of the divine messiah, the reader will know it because I will say "divine messiah."

¹²In its original compositional and interpretational context, Psalm 2 reinforces God's appointment of and support for a Davidic king (Ps 2:2, 6, 7), God's anointed Son. "I have become your Father" in v. 7 is a figure expressing the initiation of a special or unique relationship between Yahweh and his anointed, a father-son

and 2 Sam 7:14;¹³ when he proclaims the Davidic Son's ruling authority in Heb 1:8 via Ps 45:6a; and then when he reveals that the Davidic Son rules in Yahweh's presence in Heb 1:13 via Ps 110:1a.¹⁴ Whereas 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7 are verbally linked together via the term "son" (Jewish practice of *gezerah shavah*); 2 Sam 7:14, Pss 2:7, 45:6-7, and 110:1 are conceptually linked together in that they all speak of a Davidic son. The clearer passages about Davidic sonship (2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2) seem to be placed first to conceptually link the later passages (Psalms 45 and 110) with sonship (perhaps the Jewish practice of *kayose bo bemaqom aher*). The general principle that any and all Davidic sons enter into a unique relationship with Yahweh and rule with authority is particularized here via 2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:7; 45:6-7; and 110:1 to speak of a specific Davidic son (Jewish practice of *kelal u-ferat*).¹⁵ Thus together these passages reinforce a Davidic sonship theme. Conceptual continuity of Davidic sonship obviously exists between the Old and New Testament's figurative usage and application of the term "throne," though two distinctions also exist due to its *new* compositional and interpretational context.

First, the usage and application of "your throne" is different due to its literary linking with 2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:7; 45:6-7; and 110:1. Albeit "your throne" retains the OT's proclamation of a monarch's ruling authority, the author of Hebrews intentionally intermingles vv. 6 and 7 with other OT passages that were frequently employed to speak of a Davidic Son, a Messiah, *yet to come*. For instance, the

relationship. For a father, the initiation of his relationship with his son begins at birth. For Yahweh, it begins at the Davidic king's coronation when he was formally given theocratic rights (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:27-28).

¹³In its original compositional and interpretational context, 2 Samuel 7 records Nathan's prophecy from Yahweh to David concerning military success (7:11a) and the permanent establishment of a dynasty (7:11b, 12b, 13b-14a, 16). The permanent establishment of David's dynasty is central to 2 Sam 7:14a. Yahweh promises David that he will initiate a unique Father-son relationship with David's heir, Solomon (1 Chr 28:2-7). However, the Father-son relationship is not limited to Solomon but is extended to all of David's descendants (see M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOs* 90 [1970]: 184-203). Although some like Eslinger may question whether the covenant is unconditional, God's promissory grant to David in 2 Samuel 7 extends to all Davidic descendants in much the same way as a Hittite promissory grant. Under no condition could the property or the establishment of a dynasty be taken away. Compare Eslinger, *House of God or House of David*, 57-63 with Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant," 184-203.

¹⁴In its original compositional and interpretational context, Psalm 110 is a message from Yahweh to Solomon (110:1a, 5) that assures Solomon that when he, as his appointed priest-king (110:1-2, 4), is in the midst of holy war (110:3), Yahweh will secure for him victory over all his enemies (110:1b, 5-7). For my discussion concerning Solomon as the recipient of Psalm 110 see "Psalm 110:1 in the New Testament," *BibSac* 142 (1992): 438-53. For a similar but more recent discussion see James Kurian, *Jesus Our High Priest* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 31-45.

¹⁵For a definition and other apparent usage of these and other Jewish rules of exegesis see Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in The Apostolic Period* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). For early Jewish practices of exegesis, see Herbert W. Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5-13* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

sonship theme and themes of victory in Ps 2:8-9, 11-12 led to several first century eschatological recontextualizations of the Psalm (1QS^a 2:11; 4QFlor 1:18-19; *Pss Sol* 17:4, 21). Likewise, Ps 45:6 may also be linked to 2 Samuel 7 in *T. Jud.* 22:2-3 when the author makes a conceptual link with the mention of "an oath the Lord swore to me [Judah] that the rule would not cease for my posterity." This conceptual link emphasizes and anticipates a future ruler from Judah's tribe.¹⁶

After years of exile (with a first century Jewish cultural-theological worldview in mind), a Jewish Christian reader would have understood the implications of intentionally selecting and linking together these OT citations, particularly 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2. Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, the author of Hebrews recognizes Jesus to be Israel's envisioned Jewish messiah who fulfilled (to a certain degree) God's oath to David. Thus the author alludes to the fact that the Davidic Son *had come*, that Yahweh had restored Davidic rule via Jesus (cp. 1:2 with 7:14-17, 28b; 1:3 with 1:8, 13), and that Jesus (i.e., the Son, the messiah) currently exercises authority in Yahweh's presence (cp. 1:5, 8, 13 with 5:5-10; 7:20-22; cf. Acts 2:29-36).

The second distinction concerns the "eternal" dimension of the Son's ruling authority due to the different application and expanded sense of the concept "forever and ever."

C. "Forever and Ever" in Heb 1:8

In Heb 1:8, the author of Hebrews intentionally links the figurative concept "forever" in Psalm 45 with the permanence and immutability of Yahweh and his rule expressed in Psalm 102. Initially composed by an afflicted OT saint, Psalm 102 is the psalmist's prayer to Yahweh (102:1-2) about an unbearable life situation (102:3-11, 23), petitioning Yahweh to spare his life (102:24). Despite his affliction, the psalmist finds comfort in Yahweh's sovereignty (102:12, 25-26) and future intervention on behalf of himself and Zion (102:13-17). Thus future generations will praise Yahweh (102:18-22). Verses 25-28, quoted in Heb 1:10-12, are of particular comfort to the psalmist because he realizes that Yahweh's existence is permanent and immutable. Whereas creation has a fleeting existence (יָאָבְדוּ, "they will perish"; יָבִלּוּ, "they will all wear out"; and יִתְחַלְּפוּ "they will be discarded"), Yahweh does not ("but you remain the same," וְאַתָּה הוּא; "and your years never end," לֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲשָׁקוּ יָמָיו).

¹⁶Rabbinic literature also refers to these texts to speak of a future messiah figure (2 Samuel 7: *Gen. Rab.* 97; Psalm 2: *b. Sukkah* 52a; Psalm 45: *Gen. Rab.* 99; Psalm 110: *The Midr. Pss.* 5 § 4, 1 § 29). Thus, continuity exists between early and later Jewish sources and their application of these texts to an anticipated Messiah. See Str-B 3:19-20, 677, 679; 4:452-65.

Although discontinuity exists between Psalm 45 and Psalm 102 in that the former refers to a human Davidic monarch and the latter to Yahweh, continuity exists concerning the concept of time. Psalm 45's figurative "forever" conceptually links together with Psalm 102's literal "remain the same" and "years never end." Once again, the clearer passage (Psalm 102) clarifies the new sense of meaning of "forever" (Psalm 45) in this new context (perhaps the Jewish practice of *kayose bo bemaqom aher*). This intentional selection and linking together of Psalm 45 with Psalm 102 serve to elevate the Son's status. First, "forever" speaks directly of the *eternal duration* of the Davidic Son himself (cp. 5:5-6 [6:20]; 7:14-17, 20-21, 24-25), which was not the case of previous Davidic monarchs.

Second, the original focus of Ps 102:25-27 was upon Yahweh's immutability and permanent rule over the affairs of the earth; even during the second temple period, whenever Psalm 102 is quoted, it maintains direct reference to Yahweh (cf. 11QPs^a and *Lad. Jac.* 7:35). Here, however, it now speaks of the Davidic Son's authority from heaven (1:3, 13; cf. 5:5-10; 7:14-17, 28b) over all those who are his subjects on earth (cf. 1:14; 2:8b-16; 8:6; 9:15). Like his divine Father, *the Davidic Son and his ruling authority are permanent and immutable.* (The author will visit this theme again concerning the Son's royal high priesthood, 7:21, 23-24, 25-28.)¹⁷ The once earthbound rule of the Davidic monarch as well as the ruler himself have taken on an eternal or heavenly dimension. Thus the Davidic Son, and we might add his rule, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (13:8). Contextually, Gordon rightly notes that Jesus in Heb 13:8 stands in contrast with the generation of leaders already gone, but "the earthly Jesus about whom they had been taught remained unchanged and worthy of their commitment in the present and ever thereafter."¹⁸ Thus the readers are once again challenged not to reject Jesus, their Davidic king-priest (cp. 2:1-9 with 6:6; 10:29; cf. Rev 5:13-14).

Nevertheless, what makes the Son superior to the angels is not limited to his eternal duration or his permanent rule. Angels are likewise eternal beings (Luke 20:36), some of whom have been granted ruling authority (Dan 10:13; Jude 9; *1 En.* 20:1-8). Rather, like his divine Father but unlike the angels, the Davidic Son is also God. This brings us to our next expression, "O God."

¹⁷Kurialan nicely develops the significance of εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα in Hebrews 7 where the phrase is emphasized concerning the messiah's priesthood (*Jesus Our High Priest*, 128-38, 203-7, 215-16).

¹⁸Robert P. Gordon, *Hebrews* (ed. John Jarick; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2000), 166.

II. "O GOD"

A. "O God" in Ps 45:6

The psalmist in Ps 45:6 pays homage to his Davidic monarch with the expression, "O God" (אֱלֹהִים).¹⁹ Although such language directed to a human king is not strange in ancient poetry,²⁰ the statement here merely means that this Davidic monarch receives his authority from God. Yahweh's ruling authority is extended to the Davidic king in much the same way as Yahweh's authority is extended to Moses when he says, "See! I made you God to Pharaoh" (רָאָה נִחַיִּךְ אֱלֹהִים לְפָרְעֹה) (Exod 7:1). The psalmist does not believe the king to be God any more than the people of Israel believed Moses to be God. Unlike Israel's surrounding cultures, there is no "interpenetration between the divine and human spheres." "In Israel," says Heintz, "this relation is limited to the king's function as the 'representative' of God."²¹ Thus the king is praised for his rule over Israel in a manner that is supposed to resemble God's ruling authority over the universe.

Harris characterizes the God-like rule of the Davidic king in at least four ways. The Davidic Son reflects God's presence when "glory and majesty" are ascribed to him (45:4-5a) as they are ascribed to God (Ps 96:6; cf. Ps 26:8), when he is declared "a defender and lover of truth and righteousness" (45:5b-8a) as God is (Pss 33:5; 48:10-11; Isa 61:8), when he is described as "judging with equity" (45:7b) as is true of God (Pss 67:4; 99:4a), and when God's rule is described as eternal (Pss 10:16; 93:2; 145:13) as David's son (dynasty) is via his children (45:17a).²² Thus the attribution of deity is figurative. The psalmist praises this particular Davidic monarch as the one who exercises God-like ruling authority over Israel and is

¹⁹The author of Hebrews faithfully duplicates the LXX's translation of the Hebrew (cp. Masoretic Text or 11QPs^d). The LXX translates Ps 45:7a from קָדַשׁ אֱלֹהִים לְפָרְעֹה to ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος (LXX: Ps 44:7a). One may question why the LXX uses the nominative ὁ θεός, rather than a vocative θεέ. The answer is usage. The LXX often uses the nominative in place of the vocative (Pss 3:8; 5:11; 9:33) and seldom if ever does the LXX use the vocative. As in the LXX, NT Greek often uses the nominative in place of the vocative (Mark 15:34, John 20:28). Thus the nominative ὁ θεός rather than the vocative θεέ is used.

²⁰According to Briggs, "the great kings reflect the divine majesty, and in a sense partake of the divine nature" (Pss 8:5; 82:6; John 10:35) (Briggs, *Psalms*, 1:141). Durham also says such expressions reveal respect for royalty as either divine or divinely authorized, and were common in the ancient Near East (J. I. Durham, "The King as 'Messiah' in the Psalms," *RevExp* 3 [1984]: 425-35). For ancient Near Eastern examples see "The Code of Hammurabi" (i.e., i:24-38; iv:33-35; v:1-20), in *The Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (trans. T. J. Meeks; ed. J. Pritchard; Princeton: University Press, 1969), 163-80.

²¹J. G. Heintz, "Royal Traits and Messianic Figures: A Thematic and Iconographical Approach," in *Messiah: Development in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Philadelphia: Augsburg, 1992), 52-66, esp. 64-65.

²²M. J. Harris, "The Translation of Elohim in Psalm 45:7-8," *TynBul* 35 (1984): 65-89.

credited with judging ethical behavior in a manner similar to that of God who rules and judges the universe.

B. "O God" in Heb 1:8

Unlike his OT counterpart, the author of Hebrews presents the Davidic Son, to be more than God-like. In its *new* compositional and interpretive context, the expression "O God" is understood literally of the Davidic Son through the literary connections with Deut 32:43²³ and Ps 102:25-27. Like Psalm 102, Deuteronomy 32, in its OT context, is directed to Yahweh. More specifically, Deuteronomy 32 is a covenantal lawsuit issued by Yahweh against Israel (Deut 32:1-27), which speaks of Yahweh's vengeance and promised deliverance of Israel from her enemies (Deut 32:28-43). Verse 43, quoted in Heb 1:6, calls for angelic beings to rejoice concerning Israel's hope in Yahweh's future vengeance and deliverance (cp. Rev 6:10).

Although early and later Judaism continues to view Deut 32:43 as praise directed to God (some LXX texts; 4QDeut^a; *Targum Onkelos*), Heb 1:6 redirects this angelic praise to the Son. So it would seem that the designations "God" in Deut 32:43 and "Lord" in Ps 102:25-27 are intentionally linked with the designation "O God" in Psalm 45. This verbal linking (Jewish practice of *gezerah shavah*) reinforces the Son's present and permanent rule as the Davidic Son in order to emphasize that he is more than human. He is divine in that the recipient of angelic praise in Deut 32:43 shifts from Yahweh to the Son, and that, like his divine Father, the Son is "God" and thereby worthy of worship (Isa 6:1-3; Rev 4:6-11; 5:11-14). More specifically, the OT citations seem to declare that the Davidic Son is God when the author points out in v. 6 that angels worship the Son as "God" via Deut 32:43, when he hails the Son in vv. 8-9 to be "God" via Ps 45:6a (perhaps 7:3), and when he identifies the Son in vv. 10-12 to be the "Lord" who created the universe via Ps 102:25-27 (Ps 104:4 in 1:6; cp. 11:3).²⁴ Thus the application of "O God" to the

²³One of two passages may be cited in Heb 1:6b, Deut. 32:43 or Ps 96:7. Although the phrase about angels worshipping God is a textual problem in Deut 32:43, the reading exists in 4QDeut^a, LXX Codex A, *Odes Sol.* 2:43, and Justin Martyr. It seems probable that the OT citation corresponds with Deut 32:43 of the LXX (Codex A), which may be based upon an older Hebrew reading like that found in 4Qdeut^a. Thus the author of Hebrews may have used an LXX version that had this similar reading. For similar perspectives see S. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: G. Van Soest, 1961), 20-23; H. Hegemann, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (THKNT; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), 52; Paul Ellingworth, *Commentary on Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 118-19; Victor C. Pfitzner, *Hebrews* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 54.

²⁴Although the Septuagint adds "O Lord" to 102:26 (LXX 101:25), it does so with justification. Psalm 102 begins with a petition to Yahweh, and thus "O Lord" is used and translated accordingly (102:2 [101:1]). Later, when Yahweh is addressed as one who sits enthroned, the translator once again translates the Hebrew vocative as "O Lord" (102:11 [101:10]). When attention shifts from Yahweh's enthronement to his creative activities (102:26) the Septuagint translator adds the implicitly understood vocative, "O Lord." As I have said elsewhere, "The addition does not distort the

Son in Hebrews 1 declares the Son's superiority to the angels in that *this Davidic Son, namely Jesus, is divine, the creator of all things (including the angels), and worshiped by angelic beings.*

Such a presentation of a messiah figure, however, is contrary to the messianic expectations evident in other first century Jewish literature. People did not anticipate a divine Davidic son. They tended to look for a political/military leader, or anticipated a priestly messiah, or expected a human Davidic messiah, or awaited a combination of two or three messiah figures.²⁵ Even the disciples wrestled with the type of messiah Jesus was. They did not realize fully who he was until after his death and resurrection. This particular post-resurrection text, however, reveals to these Jewish Christian readers that Jesus, the Davidic Son, the realized Messiah, was far greater than any anticipated messiah figure. Although some of the Jewish community in Palestine had accepted him as the Messiah, the majority rejected and crucified him. Nevertheless, that did not prevent Yahweh from establishing his Son's kingdom rule, which is the thrust of our next phrase, "scepter of justice . . . of his kingdom."

III. "SCEPTER OF JUSTICE . . . OF YOUR KINGDOM"

A. "Scepter of Justice" in Ps 45:6

The psalmist identifies the Davidic monarch's current rule with yet another metonymy of subject, the "scepter of justice" (שֵׁטֶר צֶדֶק). Like the throne, the scepter is an important part of the royal insignia. It symbolizes the monarch's regal power bestowed on him by the gods to indicate his function as judge and administrator of his people. It also typifies the monarch's protection of his subjects, his prosperity, and his relationship with the gods. Thus in Psalm 45:6, the "scepter of justice" alludes to the Davidic monarch's act of judging. David's ruling authority (i.e., "the throne") was established by Yahweh to maintain justice (1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8), and thus his ruling authority presumes the execution of judgment (Ps 122:1-5; cf. Prov 20:8). Since the rule of Solomon and subsequent Davidic sons involve the act of judging, their personal scruples affect their ability to judge justly.

contextual or conceptual sense of the Psalm. It does, however, explicitly identify the subject who the psalmist only implicitly addresses as creator." Thus the author of Hebrews seems to honor his Septuagint-based text (Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, 136-41).

²⁵Although this listing of messianic expectations is not intended to be exhaustive, it serves to identify what seems to be major messianic perspectives: priestly messiah (1QS 9:7-11; 1QS^a [1Q28a]); political/military leader (1 En. 90:37-38; perhaps the Qumran community's messiah of Israel may be understood as a political messiah, 1QS 9:7-11); and Davidic messiah (Pss. Sol. 17:25-35; 18:5-9; 1QS^b 5:20-29 [1Q28b]; 4QpIsa^a frgs. 2-6, 8-10 [4Q161]; 4 QFlor 1:1-13 [4Q174]; 4QTest 1:9-13 [4Q175]; 4Q252 5:3-4; 4Q285 frg. 5; 11Q14; Matt 2:1-11; 1 Enoch 37-71).

The psalmist identifies the moral character of this particular monarch when he says that he is one who loves righteousness (צֶדֶק) and hates wickedness (עָוֹן). As a lover of righteousness, he does that which is ethically right (Deut 6:25; Prov 1:3; 2:6-11; cp. 1 Kgs 10:1-10) as opposed to that which is ethically wrong and against God's standards (Isa 32:6-8; 59:9-15; Ezek 18:5-9). In Psalm 45, the monarch is depicted as one who loves righteousness and hates wickedness just as Yahweh loves righteousness (Pss 11:7; 33:5) and hates wrongdoing (Prov 8:7-8; Isa 61:8). Thus, just as God judges people justly (Pss 36:6, 10; 48:10; 89:16; cf. Jer 9:24), the Davidic monarch is also obligated to judge people justly (Pss 72:1-2, 4, 12-14; 101:3b-8; cf. Jer 22:2-3). Consequently, the psalmist seems to portray the monarch's throne to be "the earthly counterpart to God's throne" and the Davidic monarch to be the one who "represents the royal presence of God on earth."²⁶

B. Scepter of Justice in Heb 1:8

In keeping with OT usage, "the scepter" retains its figurative sense to symbolize the Davidic Son's function as administrator and judge. Explicit attention is drawn to the quality of the Son's rule when God says to him, "the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of his [i.e., the Son's] kingdom."²⁷ This ethical quality was also envisioned of the messiah among first century Jewish people (*T. Jud.* 22:2-3; 24:1-6; 4QpGen^a 5:3; cp. Pss. Sol. 17:36, 41, 43). Thus in keeping with a first century cultural-theological worldview of a righteous messiah, the phrase emphasizes the Son's current administration and judgments to be ethically right. Despite the

²⁶Harris, "The Translation of Elohim," 65-89.

²⁷The author makes several interpretive changes to his LXX (bold print). One is the change of σου to αὐτοῦ (see n. 29). Another is the addition of καὶ to make two independent clauses. ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος (Your throne, O God, is for ever), καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ (the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of his Kingdom). The third change is the addition of two articles, ἡ and τῆς to ῥάβδος and εὐθύτητος respectively. They identify a subject (ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος) of the elliptical copula for this now independent clause. This point is especially significant for accepting the variant reading. See Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: G. Van Soest, 1961), 25-26. In addition, the articles ἡ and τῆς also draw attention to what initially was an abstract description of the rule identified in the LXX. The author's addition of the articles ἡ and τῆς to ῥάβδος and εὐθύτητος identifies ἡ ῥάβδος as the subject of the clause with τῆς εὐθύτητος as an attributive genitive (also referred to as genitive of quality). The phrase "the scepter of righteousness" draws attention to the quality of the Son's rule. See Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrations by Examples* (trans. J. Smith; 1963; repr., Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1987), 57 §§ 176, 179. Finally, the omitted article ἡ before the second occurrence of ῥάβδος also serves a dual purpose. When the article ἡ is eliminated, "scepter" (ῥάβδος) is clearly identified as the predicate nominative—"the scepter of the Kingdom." No ambiguity exists about the Son's rule. The author emphasizes the fact that "the scepter of righteousness" is the Son's "scepter of the kingdom." The omitted article ἡ before the second occurrence of "scepter" (ῥάβδος) maintains the emphasis concerning the quality of the Son's rule in the kingdom.

similarities with the OT and first century expectations, two differences exist.

First, the significance of the Son's just rule is transformed or heightened due to his divine and eternal dimensions. In comparison with the OT, the God-like Davidic monarch's attempt to mirror Yahweh's just rule is no longer hindered by human frailty. As God, the divine Davidic Son shares all the attributes of his divine Father. The human dimension of failure to exercise a righteous rule is no longer a factor, and the divine dimension reinforces the Son's ability to exercise a just rule (cf. 7:14-17, 20-22, 26, 28b).²⁸ Thus the Son's superiority over the angels is observed in that the divine Davidic Son rules in perfect righteousness, which in turn cultivates confidence for all of us (angelic and human sons) who are his subjects.

Second, the author of Hebrews speaks of the Son's rule when he deliberately changes the LXX's translation of the OT "your kingdom" (τῆς βασιλείας σου) to "his kingdom" (τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ).²⁹ This deliberate change underscores the author's perspective about the Son's kingdom. In keeping with Jesus' teaching (Mark 1:14-15), the author recognizes that the kingdom has come (12:22-24, 28; cp. Phil 3:20-21; Col 1:13).³⁰ As a result, God makes two statements about him: the divine Davidic Son's ruling authority as well as his kingdom has come, and the divine Davidic Son's current administration and judgment are ethically right. Thus the Son's

²⁸Kurialan develops the theme of perfect righteousness via his study of the Son having been made perfect (τελειωθείς) (*Jesus Our High Priest*, 65-77, 219-33).

²⁹"His kingdom" (τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ) is the preferred reading for several reasons. First, p⁴⁶, x, and B are three early and weighty manuscripts supporting this reading. Second, "his kingdom" (τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ) is the more difficult reading to explain since the antecedent for αὐτοῦ is not readily apparent nor is it clear why a scribe would change σου to αὐτοῦ. Finally, with the exception of this one clause (καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ) the author duplicates the LXX translation of Ps 45:6-7 verbatim. The changes to the LXX at this point appear to be deliberate: (1) to create two independent thoughts; (2) to underscore to whom God is speaking; and (3) to identify the Son's current rule over his present kingdom, a kingdom that has expanded to involve a "heavenly" dimension. Others who favor this reading are: NEB; NASB; Westcott, *Hebrews*, 24-26; P. Benoit, "Le Codex Paulinien Chester Beatty," *RB* 46 (1937): 59-82, esp. 75; C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1953), 2:18; Kistemaker, *Psalms Citations*, 25-26; Hegermann, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 49; Ellingsworth, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 122-23. For the other LXX changes see n. 27.

³⁰Saucy also recognizes the presence of the Son's kingdom from other NT texts. "Since Luke tells us in Acts 1:3 that the disciples were tutored by the resurrected Christ for forty days on the Kingdom of God," says Saucy, "it is unreasonable to suggest that they would adopt some other teaching immediately after the Ascension" (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 28:23, 31; and especially 20:24, 25). "Thus, the church teaches that there is some real manifestation of the promised Kingdom now in the presence and work of the Holy Spirit; and there is a future hope for the Kingdom to come in its fullness, a fullness that would accord with the Old Testament hope of Israel." Saucy presents Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; and Heb 6:5 to support the presence of the Son's kingdom (Mark Saucy, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus: In 20th Century Theology* [Dallas: Word, 1997], 339-40). See also McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel*, 70-119; D. L. Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (ed. C. A. Blaising and D. L. Bock; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 37-67.

superiority over the angels is evident through his permanent function as the divine Davidic Son who presently executes ethical judgments perfectly over the subjects of his kingdom. This current rule over his kingdom is evident in his relationship with his companions.

IV. "ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS"

A. "Above your Companions" in Ps 45:7

In its original compositional and interpretational context, "above your companions" (מִתְּחִילָּה) could refer to "fellows of royal station, kings like himself,"³¹ or fellow princes of the royal family,³² or his honor guard,³³ or merely his "fellows" or fellow Israelites.³⁴ Although the evidence appears less than convincing, perhaps "above your companions" refers to the monarch's fellow Israelites (Song 1:7; 8:13; Judg 20:11). It seems, however, the phrase could be a reference to any and all who were in attendance at the wedding. Thus Yahweh has anointed the Davidic monarch with the oil of gladness.

The phrase, "has anointed . . . with the oil of gladness" (שָׁחַן שֶׁחֵן) may be understood in at least one of three ways. First, it may be a literal anointing to kingship (David: 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 2:4; 5:3; 1 Chr 11:3; Ps 89:20; Solomon: 1 Kgs 1:39; 1 Chr 29:22; Joash: 2 Kgs 11:12; 2 Chr 23:11; and Jehoahaz: 2 Kgs 23:30).³⁵ Second, it may be a literal anointing for the wedding and typical of festivals (Eccl

³¹F. Delitzsch, *Psalms* (Commentary on the Old Testament 5; trans. F. Bolton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 84; BDB, s.v. "חֵן." In fact, Ps 89:27 speaks directly of Yahweh's vicegerent as above other kings.

³²Several Akkadian parallels may support this perspective. Sennacherib states the Ashur looked with favor on him "among all the princes." In a similar way Esarhaddon gives thanks to Marduk for choosing him to be the successor to Cyrus from "among the whole group of my older brothers." Sansariskun says of a group of gods, "among my companions [lit. twin brothers] they spotted me" (Mulder, *Studies on Psalm 45*, 121).

³³H. J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59* (trans. H. C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 456.

³⁴Cazelles notes concerning the term "חֵן" that "The unity of Israel is symbolized by the firmness with which the houses of Jerusalem are bound together" (Pss 119:63, 122:3) (Cazelles, "חֵן," *TDOT* 4:193-97). In fact, Zemek says of "חֵן" that when the term is used "some sort of common bond is always in view . . ." Thus in the case of Ps 119:63, Zemek points out that ". . . that common bond is his spiritual affinity to all men who are responsive to the Person of God and the precepts of God. Consequently, when this man of God says that he is a companion with, a friend of 'all who fear You and keep Your precepts,' he is affirming that the criteria of his horizontal communion are determined by common vertical orientations, 'fear' and 'fidelity'" (George J. Zemek, *The Word of God in the Child of God* [private publication, 1997], 175-76. Similar terms, חֵן ("your friends") and חֵן ("with friends"), are used in Song 1:7 and 8:13 respectively (cf. Judg 20:11). Anderson suggests that מִתְּחִילָּה in Ps 45:7 is a reference to "the King's fellow men in general" (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* [2 vols.; New Century Bible Commentary; London: Marshall, Marion & Scott, 1972], 1:351).

³⁵In addition to this list of Judean kings who are specifically mentioned in the OT, see Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 343-45.

9:7; Amos 6:6). Finally, it may be a metonymy for unsurpassed joy (Song 3:11; perhaps Ps 23:5).³⁶ The first suggestion seems unlikely since the monarch is presently ruling ("I recite my verses for the king," v. 1; "Your throne, O God," v. 6). Although the second option is possible via a servant of God (1 Sam 10:1; 16:13; 1 Kgs 1:34), the third option seems best because of the similar figure of speech used in v. 2 ("your lips have been anointed with grace"). Most tend to support the latter view. Thus Yahweh's joy is unlike the joy of any of the Davidic monarch's contemporary kings, royal family, honor guard, and fellow Israelite attendants at the wedding. In other words, Yahweh's joy surpasses any and all who had attended this particular monarch's wedding.

B. "Above your Companions" in Heb 1:9

Unlike the OT reference to human individuals, "companions" (μετόχους), which occurs five times in Hebrews (1:9; cp. 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8) and once in Luke 5:7, is a term not limited to mere mortals who attend a God-like Davidic monarch's wedding. Rather, "companions" refers to angelic beings. In this *new* compositional and interpretive context, God speaks and asks to which of the angels has he spoken (1:5, 6, 7, 13) in contrast to what he has spoken to the Son (1:8-12). In a similar declaration in Heb 5:5-6, 10 and 7:16-20, God declares that the Son is a Davidic king-priest with an emphasis on his priesthood. The Son's office of royal high priesthood would be familiar to those of first century Judaism because of the Hasmoneans who had functioned as both King and High Priest, except that in Hebrews, the Son's royal high priesthood extends over angelic beings.

Thus in a legal sense, the Son is superior to his companions because he has been assigned a superior office over the angels as the divine Davidic Son, and his subservient companions worship him. This verb, "let them worship" (προσκυνήσάτωσαν from προσκυνέω, 1:6), occurs twice in Hebrews (Heb 1:6; 11:21) because of two OT citations. Here, Deut 32:43 is cited. In the LXX, προσκυνέω translates the Hebrew term, *shachah*, which is frequently used by Moses of a person who "bows down" or "prostrates oneself" in homage before a superior (Gen 23:7; 48:12; Exod 18:7), a governor (Gen 42:6), or angelic being (Num 22:31). It is also linked with worshipping foreign gods (Exod 32:8; Deut 8:19; 29:26; 30:17) and Yahweh (Gen 22:5; 24:26; 47:31; Exod 4:31; 33:8; 34:8; Deut 26:10; 32:43 [cp. 4Q44]). In its OT context, Deut 32:43 concludes Moses' song with an exaltation to angels to bow down in homage to Yahweh for his future vengeance

³⁶See A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), 249; E. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms* (Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1953), 200; or P. J. King, "A Study of Psalm 45" (Ph.D. diss., Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1959), 85.

and deliverance of Israel. In Heb 1:6, angels bow down in homage to the divine Davidic Son.

Not only do the Son's companions worship him, they serve him (cp. λειτουργικά, 1:14). In the OT, angelic beings typically serve God (Gen 19:1-25; 2 Sam 24:16-17; 2 Kgs 19:35; 2 Chr 32:31). Likewise, in Philo, "ministering angels" listen to a song of Moses in which he offers to God his final thanksgiving "for the rare and extraordinary gifts with which he had been blest from his birth to his old age." They listen, in service of Yahweh, to hear "whether the song has any discordant note" (*Virt* 74). However in Hebrews, angels are spiritual beings who carry out the desires of the Son (1:7). The recipients of angelic service are believers (1:14; cf. Luke 4:10). More specifically, angels are sent by the Son to minister to "those who will inherit salvation" (cf. 9:28; 12:22-24, 28; 13:13-14; Phil 3:20; Col 1:12-14), and angels will play a role under the Son's direction in separating the wicked from the righteous (Matt 13:39-49).

Thus the author identifies the Son's superiority over angelic beings in at least four ways. First, the divine Davidic Son has been assigned and thereby exercises an active ruling authority over angelic companions. Second, the expanded heavenly dimension of the Son's kingdom now includes angelic companions to be subjected to him. (To my knowledge, angels were never considered subjects of an OT Davidic monarch's domain.) Third, as subservient companions, angelic beings worship the divine Davidic Son. Finally, as subservient companions, angelic beings serve the divine Davidic Son and God's people, more specifically the church. Thus the OT and first century kingdom language has shifted from an exclusively earthly kingdom to include a heavenly (spiritual) dimension of the divine Davidic Son's perfect kingdom authority.

Two issues are worth mentioning here. First, if kingdom language has shifted from an exclusively earthly kingdom to include a heavenly (spiritual) dimension of the Son's perfect kingdom rule, does this suggest that no future kingdom is yet to come? More specifically, does the author of Hebrews believe that the Son's current rule and his kingdom are fully realized? The answer appears to be no. The author recognizes that demonic forces (2:14), death (2:15), and earthly opponents (10:26-31) still plague the Son's kingdom.³⁷ This is not to diminish the victory that the Son has achieved (2:14-18; cf. 1 Cor 15:54-57). It does, however, point to the fact that the Son's ruling authority over his kingdom is presently limited and is not yet

³⁷See also Rev 20:10-15. First Corinthians also specifies death as an enemy, the last enemy, to be subjected to the Son (15:26). The same passage, however, qualifies what "all things" (πάντα) does not include, i.e., the divine Father is not subject to the divine Son (15:27-28; cf. 11:3). In addition, Clement, while commenting on much of Hebrews 1, takes note of "and again he says to him 'Sit on my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' Who then are the enemies? Those who are wicked and oppose his will" (1 *Clem.* 36:5-6). Such statements would appear to counter Wright in *Jesus and the Victory of God* when he presents the work of Jesus as a complete victory (pp. 604-11).

fully realized. But the existence of a heavenly kingdom does not deny the anticipation of a future kingdom. It merely affirms that a spiritual aspect of the realized Messiah's kingdom exists and that such a kingdom was never considered during the OT era. Therefore as the appointed heir of all things (1:2; 7:28), the Son's present kingdom and current rule will be extended (2:5-9; 13:13-16; perhaps 9:27-28). The phrase "until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου) from Ps 110:1b in Heb 1:13b looks forward to a time when the Son's ruling authority will include the complete subjugation of his enemies (Ps 8:4-6 in Heb 2:5-9; 10:12-13, 26-31; cf. Matt 13:41-50; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 5:8-10).³⁸ Thus Heb 1:5-13 stresses the divine Davidic Son's current rule from heaven but not at the exclusion of the future consummation of his kingdom. This current rule is not, however, a passive one.³⁹

The second issue concerns his active rule over the church as the divine Davidic Son. Although merely implied in Heb 1:14, his active rule over the church is developed further in Hebrews 3. While stressing the superiority of Jesus over Moses,⁴⁰ the author of

³⁸For a similar expression but with a different Greek term, ἄχρι, see 1 Cor 15:25, ἄχρι οὗ θῇ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ("until he has put all his enemies under his feet"). Glenn argues that Heb 2:5-9 looks toward the messianic world to come (Donald R. Glenn, "Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2: A Case Study in Biblical Hermeneutics and Biblical Theology," in *Walvoord: A Tribute* [Chicago: Moody, 1982], 39-51). Likewise, Gordon rightly points out in Heb 10:13 that the "waiting theme" influences the central chapters of Hebrews and that "Christ himself is described as waiting (*ekdechomenos*) the full visible expression of his victory. . . . 'Until' implies an interval between Christ's installation at God's right hand and the subjugation of his enemies (cf. 1 Cor. 15:25)" (Gordon, *Hebrews*, 113). Elsewhere, Scripture seems to support an already-not yet form of the Son's kingdom (Mark 13; Matthew 25; Luke 22:29-30; Acts 1:6-8; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph 5:4; Col 1:12-13), which is advocated by several scholars: McKnight, *A New Vision of Israel*, 120-55; Saucy, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 339-40; J. Lanier Burns, "Israel and the Church in Progressive Dispensationalism," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism* (ed. H. W. Bateman; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 263-91. Although from a somewhat different perspective, Poythress presents himself as both an "optimistic premillennialist" in that he believes in an even better premillennium than a premillennialist, and an "earthly amillennialist" in that he hopes for a new earth in renewal of this earth (Vern Sheridan Poythress, "Currents within Amillennialism," *Presbyterian* 26 (2000): 21-25).

³⁹Based largely on his understanding of Ps 110:1, Saucy argues that the Davidic covenant has merely been inaugurated through the work of Jesus. Jesus' activity is simply one of intercession and not one of rule. Thus, the Son's current rule is a passive one. However, Ps 110:1, taken into consideration with Heb 1:5-13 as a complete unit, seems to suggest that the Son's rule is not passive because the Son exercises ruling authority over angelic beings. See Mark Saucy, "Exaltation Christology in Hebrews: What Kind of Reign?" *TrinJ* 14NS (1993): 42-62; id., *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 343-47; Robert Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 69-76.

⁴⁰Like the angels who are "servants" (λειτουργικά πνεύματα) in Heb 1:7 and 14, Moses also is described as a "servant" (θεράπων). The reference to Moses as God's servant is very much in keeping with the OT and second temple literature. God declared Moses to be his servant (Num 12:7; Josh 1:2), Moses recognized himself as God's servant (Exod 4:10; 14:31; Num 11:11; Deut 3:24), and God's people honored

Hebrews says in v. 6 that "Christ is faithful, as Son, over God's household, namely the church."⁴¹ Granting that Heb 3:2, 5, and 6 call attention to OT king-priest imagery (most specifically 1 Chr 17:13-14 and 1 Sam 2:35),⁴² the mention of "Son" also recalls Hebrews 1 where he has been described as the appointed royal high priest (1:2-3; cf. 3:2; 5:5-10; 7:28) and divine Davidic king over all things (1:5-13; cf. 2:5-8).⁴³ Hebrews 3 addresses his role as the royal priest who is greater than Moses. Thus as the appointed royal priest, the Son's current rule over the church (or "sons," 2:10; 12:7-10) is a preview of the Son's eschatological kingdom. At the present time, the Son faithfully rules and exercises authority over the church (8:6; 9:15; cf. Phil 3:20-21; Colossians 13-14, 18).⁴⁴ His present rule not only affirms but guarantees to his sons that a future extension of the divine Davidic Son's kingdom authority, in all its fullness, is yet to come.

V. CONCLUSION

The importance of Psalm 45 to the book of Hebrews is first evident in the intentionally centered and significantly unifying placement of vv. 6 and 7 among six other OT citations in Heb 1:5-13. In keeping with his cultural-theological worldview, three OT

him as God's servant (LXX: Josh 9:2; 1 Chr 16:40 adds "through the hands of Moses, God's servant," Wis 10:16; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.8 § 212; Philo, *Sacr.* 12; 1 *Clem.* 4:12; 43:1 [Heb 3:5 quote]; 51:3-5). The usage of "servant" (θεράπων) here ought not to be confused with the author's other usage of the λειτουργ- word group (cp. 8:2, 6; 9:21; 10:11) when used in connection with priestly service.

⁴¹Who or what is this house? The emphasis is that the church is the "household of God" ("whose house we are" οὗ οἴκος ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς). "We are" refers to those whom the author speaks of as "holy brothers" (3:1) and "sharers of a heavenly calling" (3:1). In fact, these expressions as well as "sharers in Christ" (3:14) and "sharers in the Holy Spirit" (6:2) all speak of those who will also "inherit salvation" (1:14). God himself is currently building the church (3:4; cf. 1 Cor 3:7), and the Son (the divine Davidic Son) currently rules over it (3:6; cf. Eph 5:23; Col 1:18-20). Thus this specific house, unlike during the OT era, includes people throughout the world.

⁴²Mary Rose D'Angelo develops this in her dissertation, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (SBL 42; Ann Arbor, MI: SBL, 1979), 65-93.

⁴³The term "Son," which is defined in Heb 1:5-13 to be a reference to the divine Davidic Son, is alluded to several times in Hebrews to further develop the author's argument. For 3:2-5 see nn. 41 and 42. In 5:1-4, Kurian argues in *Jesus Our High Priest* that "one of the major differences between Christ and the priests of the Old Covenant is that the previous one is Son whereas the other ones are men" (p. 59). Concerning Heb 7:26-28, he argues that "the two titles of Jesus, High Priest and Son, are inseparably connected as the identity of the new High Priest" (p. 158).

⁴⁴Although Mark Saucy denies that the Son presently exercises an active rule, Bock lists twenty examples of the Son's active rule over the church. Jesus exercises his authority as a shepherd (Matt 9:36; Mark 6:34; John 10:16); with regards to regeneration via the Spirit (John 3); over seas and rivers (Luke 8:22-25; cf. Ps 89:25); extending the promise and justification to Gentiles (Acts 13:37-39); providing forgiveness of sins once for all (Acts 5, 13; Hebrews 8-10); etc. Compare Saucy, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 339-47 with Bock, "Covenants in Progressive Dispensationalism," 169-203. We might also add that Jesus exercises Davidic king-priest authority in his ability to provide rest for the believer. See Jon Laasma, *I Will Give You Rest* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

citations draw the first-century reader's attention to a Davidic messiah theme (Pss 2:7; 110:1; 2 Sam 7:14) and the other three citations draw attention to a deity theme (Pss 104:4; 102:25-27; Deut 32:43). Thus the author's intentional selection, thematic intermingling, and (Jewish) practice of linking together OT citations serve to identify and support the Son's superiority over the angels. As a result, the author creates a conceptual chiastic structure, which is presented below.⁴⁵

A	The Son's status as Davidic monarch (Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14)	Heb 1:5
B	The Son's status as God (Deut 32:43; Ps 104:4)	Heb 1:6-7
C	The Son's status as divine Davidic monarch	Heb 1:8-9
B'	The Son's status as God (Ps 102:25-27)	Heb 1:10-12
A'	The Son's status as Davidic monarch (Ps 110:1)	Heb 1:13-14

This *new* compositional and interpretational context redirects original references and expands figures of speech to speak of a Son who is superior to the angels. Passages that spoke initially of a human Davidic monarch (A and A') and those that spoke of God (B and B') are most pointedly united via Ps 45:6-7 (C), which clearly identifies the Davidic monarch differently than the psalmist of Psalm 45. The Davidic Son, as he is presented in Heb 1:5-13, is superior to any of his predecessors. Thus Psalm 45 is important to the book of Hebrews due to its intentionally centered and significantly unifying placement among six OT passages, which in turn serves as a basis for identifying several major Christological points about the Son's superiority over the angels.

The author uses Ps 45:6-7 to focus attention to the Son's superiority over the angels in God's new administration of human history by underscoring the Son's current and permanent rule as the superior Davidic Son. First, unlike his angelic companions, the Son has been assigned and thereby exercises an active ruling authority as Davidic Son. Second, unlike his angelic companions, the Davidic Son is God, who is divinely eternal and capable of ruling his kingdom in perfect righteousness. Third, the divine Davidic Son's present kingdom has an expanded heavenly dimension that now includes the subjugation of angelic beings. Fourth, subservient angelic companions worship him as the divine Davidic Son. Finally, subservient angelic companions serve him as the divine Davidic Son and the church (1:14). Thus the citation is equal in prominence with other OT citations frequently mentioned as significant to the book of Hebrews, namely, Ps 8:4-6 in Heb 2:5-18; Pss 2:7 and 110:4 in Heb 5:1-5:10; and Jer 31:31-34 and Ps 40:6-8 in Heb 7:1-10:18.

⁴⁵My understanding of this conceptual chiastic structure and the methods of interpretation between early Jewish writers and the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 1 is developed more fully in my *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, 149-206.

Most significantly, Psalm 45 is important because of its Christological contributions to the entire book of Hebrews. To begin with, the author's focused use of Ps 45:6-7 distinguishes the Son's superior name in chap. 1. He not only addresses how the designation "Son" is a superior designation compared to the cultural-theological use of "son" for angelic beings; he also addresses, albeit indirectly, how the designation of "Son" is superior to the designation of any Davidic son (monarch) of the previous and foregone era. The superiority of this Davidic Son is evident in his reign's duration. He endures forever, a theme closely connected with the permanence of the Son's royal priesthood (cp. 5:6-9; 6:20; 7:17, 21; with special attention to 7:24, 28; 13:8). Thus through Ps 45:6-7, the author draws special attention to the Son's appointed status as the Davidic Son who is eternal. Thereby, he, Jesus, inherits a superior name, namely, "divine Davidic Son" or "Son of God." In addition, the subsequent mention of "Son of God" (6:6; 10:29) and development of "Son" (3:2-6; 5:5-10; 7:26-28; cf. 4:14) in the book of Hebrews always draw our attention back to Heb 1:5-13. The author makes sure his first, as well as twenty-first, century readers understand the message about Jesus. Jesus is the divine Davidic Son, the Son of God! Do not lose sight of this message (2:1), do not turn away from him (4:12), do not abandon him (6:4-6), do not lose confidence in him (10:19-23). Rather, let us persevere and hold fast to the teaching regarding the divine Davidic king-priest, namely, the Son of God.